

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8443

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 14965

EYES ONLY FOR ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY JENKINS, H AND
ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON, NEA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OREP (CODEL FLOWERS AND ABOUREZK)

SUBJ: CODEL FLOWERS AND CODEL ABOUREZK - ROOM CRISIS

1. AS WE HAVE REPORTED, HOTEL SITUATION IN CAIRO PARTICULARLY
CRITICAL AT THIS TIME DURING HEIGHT OF TOURIST SEASON, AND WE
HAVE HAD TO RELY ON OUR PREVIOUS GOOD RELATIONS WITH HILTON
AND PRESSURE FROM PRESIDENCY TO MAKE WHATEVER ROOMS WE HAVE
NEEDED AVAILABLE. IN ADDITION HILTON EXTREMELY SENSITIVE
TO CANCELLING RESERVATIONS IN WAKE OF ARAB SUMMIT WHEN THEY
FORCED TO VACATE ENTIRELY HOTEL FOR PERIOD OF FIVE DAYS. WHILE
WE REALIZE THIS IS HOTEL'S PROBLEM, IT DOES MAKE THEM LESS
WILLING TO COOPERATE WITH US ON CODELS. HILTON ALSO MAKES
POINT THAT CANCELLING CONFIRMED RESERVATIONS EXPOSES HOTEL TO
CIVIL SUITS BY ANGRY PATRONS.

2. THROUGH PERSUASION AND PRESIDENCY'S ORAL INTERVENTION, WE
HAVE OBTAINED MOST OF OUR REQUIREMENTS (ALTHOUGH SOME DOUBLING
WILL BE ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY) FOR CODELS WAXMAN, RIBICOFF/BAKER,
QUIE AND WOLFF). WE HAVE NOT, HOWEVER, BEEN ABLE TO GET
HILTON TO TAKE NECESSARY ACTION TO MAKE ALL NEEDED ROOMS
AVAILABLE FOR CODEL FLOWERS AND ABOUREZK. WE HAVE A
COMMITMENT FOR TWENTY ROOMS FOR CODEL FLOWERS (INCLUDING
NECESSARY DOUBLING) FOR NOV. 8 AND 9, BUT NEED 10 ADDITIONAL
ROOMS FOR NOV. 10. WE HAVE NO CONFIRMED ROOMS FOR SENATOR
ABOUREZK. WE HAVE IMPORED AND REASONED WITH HILTON, BUT
THEY ARE UNWILLING TO BREAK CONFIRMED RESERVATIONS. PRESIDENCY
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HAS INTERVENED THREE TIMES, BUT HILTON'S POSITION AS OF TODAY

IS ADAMANT THAT THEY WILL NOT VACATE ROOMS WITHOUT SOME WRITTEN ORDER FROM PRESIDENCY WHICH WOULD ALLOW THEM TO BREAK THEIR CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS WITH CUSTOMERS AND WITHOUT ALTERNATIVE ROOMS FOR THOSE FORCED OUT.

3. WE HAVE REQUESTED PRESIDENCY TO ISSUE SUCH WRITTEN ORDER AND ARE AWAITING ITS DECISION. IT MAY OR MAY NOT WORK SINCE ALTERNATIVE ROOMS STILL HAVE TO BE FOUND AND OTHER HOTELS ARE FULLY BOOKED. LAST RESORT WILL BE TO PLACE SOME CODEL MEMBERS IN PRIVATE EMBASSY RESIDENCES FOR NIGHTS WHEN HOTEL ROOMS NOT AVAILABLE.

4. FURTHER PROBLEM AROSE IN DISCUSSIONS WITH HILTON TODAY REGARDING NIGHT OF NOV. 15. WITH CODEL SCHEDULE AS IT NOW STANDS, WE WILL BE USING MAJORITY OF ONE ENTIRE FLOOR FOR PERIOD NOV. 8-19 WITH EXCEPTION NOV. 15. HOTEL POINTS OUT THEY CANNOT RENT ROOMS FOR ONE NIGHT AND GUARANTEE OCCUPANCY FOR NEXT. WHILE THEY DID NOT SPECIFICALLY STATE REQUIREMENT, HILTON CLEARLY VIEWS IT AS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO COMPENSATE FOR NIGHT OF LOST REVENUES. WE HOPE WE WILL NOT HAVE TO TAKE FURTHER ACTION ON THIS BUT WANT DEPARTMENT TO BE AWARE OF PROBLEM WE ARE FACING IN ADVANCE. WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT COMMENTS IF HILTON PRESSES FOR PAYMENT.

5. IN MEANTIME, TO BACK UP OUR EFFORTS, REQUEST DEPARTMENT MAKE HIGHEST LEVEL APPROACH POSSIBLE TO HILTON INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT STRAND EXPLAINING TO HIM IMPORTANCE OF CONGRESSIONAL VISITS AND ASKING HIM IN THIS SITUATION TO MAKE DECISION TO CANCEL ALREADY CONFIRMED RESERVATIONS AND MAKE ROOM FOR CONGRESSMAN. SPECIFICALLY WE NEED 10 ROOMS FOR EVENING NOV. 10 AND 7 ROOMS FOR NIGHTS NOV. 13 AND 14. DEPARTMENT SHOULD STRESS HILTON IS COOPERATING FULLY WITH US AND WE UNDERSTAND THEIR PLIGHT BUT CONGRESSIONAL VISITS WE FEEL WARRANT THIS EXTRAORDINARY ACTION.

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